

Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 ERDA-05
CIAE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 OIC-02 OMB-01 PA-01
PM-04 PRS-01 SAJ-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 TRSE-00
DODE-00 NSC-05 NRC-05 /112 W
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R 201441Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2257
INFO USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA
USMISSION GENEVA
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN
USMISSION IAEAVIENNA
DIA WASHDC
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 19800

TEL AVIV FOR AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PARM, UR, US
SUBJ: PNE: KEEPING THE ISSUE ALIVE

1. SUMMARY: TASS ENGLISH WIRE DEC. 15 GAVE PRIOR NOTICE OF PLANNED PNEs AS PART OF PECHORA-VOLGA-CASPIAN WATER DIVERSION PROJECT. THIS ARTICLE, COMBINED WITH OTHER ARTICLES AND PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS, SEEM DESIGNED TO REMIND WEST, U.S. IN PARTICULAR, OF IMPORTANCE OF PNEs TO SOVIETS AND TO KEEP ISSUE FROM BEING FORGOTTEN AS ATTENTION FOCUSES ON RATIFICATION OF TTBT/PNE TREATIES AND DISCUSSION OF CTB.

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END SUMMARY.

2. TASS ENGLISH WIRE DEC. 15 CARRIED SHORT, TWO-PARAGRAPH ITEM TAKEN FROM JOURNAL, "GIDROTECHNICHESKOYE STROITELSTVO" (HYDRO-ENGINEERING), ANNOUNCING PLANNED PNEs (PLURAL) TO DIG 100 KILO-METER CANAL IN PECHORA-VOLGA-CASPIAN WATER DIVERSION PROJECT. ITEM

ALSO NOTES "TRIAL EXPLOSION OF THREE NUCLEAR DEVICES WITH A YIELD OF 15 KILOTONS EACH (EQUIVALENT TO 45,000 TONS OF TNT) HAS ALREADY BEEN CARRIED OUT." STORY GIVES NOT DATES FOR EITHER "TEST EXPLOSION" OR PLANNED ONES, BUT TASS OFFICE HERE TOLD CSM CORRESPONDENT, DAVID WILLIS, THAT TEST TOOK PLACE "EARLY THIS YEAR." TASS ITEM HAS NOT, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, BEEN PICKED UP IN DAILY PRESS THUS FAR, AND HENCE, APPEARS INTENDED FOR FOREIGN AUDIENCE.

3. OUR FILES AND MEMORIES (NEITHER AS EXTENSIVE AS THOSE OF DEPARTMENT) DO NOT RECORD SIMILAR CASE OF PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF PEACEFUL NUCLEAR EXPLOSION BY SOVIETS. (ACTION REQUESTED: WOULD APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT CHECK ON WHETHER IN PAST SOVIETS HAVE ANNOUNCED PNES IN ADVANCE OF EXPLOSION AND WHETHER SPECIFIC PROJECT ALSO MENTIONED.) CANADIAN EMBASSY HERE, WHICH CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN PAYING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO ISSUE, ALSO HAS NO RECORD OF PREVIOUS PRIOR ANNOUNCEMENT.

4. THIS IS THIRD REPORT IN RECENT MONTHS WHICH CALLS ATTENTION TO ONGOING SOVIET PNE PROGRAM. ON NOV. 3 PRAVDA HAD LONG ARTICLE BY V. GUVAREV (MOSCOW 17302) THAT PLACES PNES IN BEST POSSIBLE LIGHT, DESCRIBING THEM AS HAVING GREAT POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFIT. TO DEMONSTRATE POINT GUBAREV GIVES DETAILED EXPLANATION OF EARTHMOVING TECHNIQUES USING PNES. CONTRASTING SITUATION IN WEST WHERE THERE IS "ONLY TALK," AUTHOR CLAIMS THAT BECAUSE OF SOVIET WORK IN PNES AND U.S.-USSR AGREEMENT ON PNES, "ONE CAN NOW SAY THAT THE PEACEFUL USE OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS HAS BEEN SANCTIONED."

5. STILL EARLIER, JULY ISSUE (NO. 7, 1976) OF INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENTIAL

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AFFAIRS (AUGUST ISSUE OF ENGLISH EDITION) CARRIED ARTICLE BY R. ZHELEZNOV WHICH ALSO MAKES POINT THAT PNES ARE VERY VALUABLE (CITING U.S. EXPERTS AND EXPERIMENTS) AND THAT U.S.-USSR PNE TREATY IS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE. IMPORTANCE OF AGREEMENT IS HEIGHTENED, SAYS ZHELEZNOV, BY PROVISION IN IT FOR MUTUAL COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF PNES, SINCE "FURTHER PROGRESS" IS "POSSIBLE SOLELY ON THE BASIS OF COOPERATION AND INTERACTION" BETWEEN U.S. AND USSR.

6. PRESS ATTENTION TO PNES HAS BEEN REINFORCED BY RECENT PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS THAT HAVE ALSO GIVEN SIMILAR SIGNALS. USUNA GROUP CAME AWAY FROM THEIR TALKS WITH SOVIETS (MOSCOW 18533) WITH STRONG FEELING THAT U.S. RATIFICATION OF TTBT AND PNE AGREEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE SOVIETS WOULD PROCEED TO CTB DISCUSSIONS. NON-RATIFICATION WOULD CREATE MAJOR POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR SOVIETS. IT WOULD RAISE SUSPICION THAT U.S. WAS STALLING ON TTBT BECAUSE IT REALLY WANTED NO TEST BAN OF ANY KIND AND NON-ENDORSEMENT OF PNES BY U.S. WOULD COMPLICATE SOVIET PROBLEM OF

HOW TO CONTINUE PNES UNDER CTB REGIME. SOVIETS APPEARED TO GRASP DIFFICULTY PNES HOLD FOR CTB BUT WISHED TO WORK OUT PROBLEM SO AS TO BE ABLE TO CONTINUE PNES.

7. MOST RECENTLY IN DEC. 10 INTERVIEW WITH VOA EUROPEAN CHIEF MARK HOPKINS AT WHICH EMBOFF PRESENT, BORIS KRASULIN OF MFA'S INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION DIVISION RAISED SUBJECT OF PNES DURING DISCUSSION OF CTB AGREEMENT AND INDICATED THAT SOVIETS DO NOT CONSIDER THAT PNES MUST END WITH CTB, SINCE THERE ARE WAYS TO CONTROL PNES EVEN WHEN ALL WEAPONS TESTS ARE ENDED. HE ALLUDED TO POSSIBILITY OF IAEA ROLE (A LINE WHICH IS TAKEN BY ZHELEZNOV IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS).

8. COMMENT: ABOVE ARTICLES AND CONVERSATIONS HARDLY CONSTITUTE COORDINATED CAMPAIGN, BUT THEY DO SHOW SOVIET INTEREST IN CALLING PNES TO ATTENTION OF WEST, AND U.S. IN PARTICULAR, IN LOW-KEYED MANNER AS WE MOVE TOWARD DISCUSSION OF TTBT/PNE RATIFICATION AND TO CONSIDERATION OF CTB ISSUE -- WHICH SOVIETS CONSISTENTLY REFER CONFIDENTIAL

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TO AS COMPREHENSIVE BAN ON "NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTS." THEIR MESSAGE SEEMS TO BE:

-- PNES ARE ALIVE AND WELL AND CONTINUE TO BE OF VALUE TO USSR, IF NOT TO WEST, AND SOVIETS HAVE INTEREST IN FURTHER PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF PNES;

-- IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO RECONCILE PNES WITH NPT AND FUTURE CTB COMMITMENTS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL CONTROL MECHANISMS SUCH AS IAEA (ZHELEZNOV ARTICLE DEVOTES CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION TO THIS POINT);

-- POLITICAL COMMITMENT BY U.S. TO PNES, THROUGH RATIFICATION OF TREATY, EVEN IF NO PRACTICAL APPLICATION IS MADE OF PNES BY U.S., HAS A CERTAIN VALUE TO USSR IN CTB CONTEXT.
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